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1997

Annual Report

FOR THE TOWN OF

Benton New Hampshire

*Year Ending December 31
1997*

Annual Report

FOR THE TOWN OF

Benton
New Hampshire

Year Ending December 31
1997

TOWN OF BENTON, NH

ANNUAL REPORT

OF TOWN OFFICERS

YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1997

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BENTON TOWN OFFICERS

		Term	Exp Date
Board of Selectmen:	Stefan Cimikowski Albert Boutin, Jr. Marjorie Robitzer	3 Yrs 3 Yrs 3 Yrs	1998 1999 2000
Moderator:	John Elliott, Jr. (Elected to fill term of Mark Elliott, resigned)	2 Yrs	1998
Town Clerk:	Lyn Bandy	1 Yr	1998
Treasurer:	Paula Boutin	1 Yr	1998
Auditor:	Jean Sutherland	1 Yr	1998
Tax Collector:	Sharon Edwards	1 Yr	1998
Supervisors of the Checklist:			
	Doris Boutin Richard Saffo, Jr. Sera Harris (deceased)	3 Yrs 3 Yrs 2000	1998 1999 2000
Surveyor of Wood & Lumber:	Joseph Boutin, Jr.	1 Yr	1998
Ballot Clerk:	Aaron Goodwin	1 Yr	1998
Ballot Inspector:	Kate Goodwin	1 Yr	1998
Trustees of the Trust Funds:			
	Justen Elliott Joseph Boutin, Jr. Jeffrey Elliott	3 Yrs 3 Yrs 3 Yrs	1998 1999 2000
Planning Board:	Sera Harris (deceased) 4 yr term Catherine Steel appointed to fill until Town Meeting Kenneth Kealey Richard Saffo, Sr. Jeffrey Elliott Albert Boutin, Jr. (ex officio Member)		1999 2000 2001
Sexton:	William J. Harris	1 yr	1998
Police Officer:	Stefan Cimikowski (Appointed by Selectmen)		

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT
State of New Hampshire

Grafton S.S.

Town of Benton

To the inhabitants of the Town of Benton qualified to vote in town affairs:

You are hereby notified to meet at the Benton Community Building in said Benton on the second Tuesday of March next, the 10th, at seven o'clock in the evening to vote and act upon the following subjects:

Article 1 - To choose a town clerk, a treasurer, a tax collector, an auditor, a ballot clerk, a ballot inspector, a sexton, and a surveyor of wood and lumber for a term of one year, a moderator for a term of two years, a selectman, a supervisor of the checklist and a trustee of the trust funds for a term of three years, a member of the planning board for four years and any other agents or officers necessary for the ensuing year.

Article 2 - To see if the town will vote to accept the reports of officers and agents as printed.

Article 3 - To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$10,000 to be added to the Capital Reserve Fund for roads.

The Selectmen recommend this article.

Article 4 - We the undersigned, request that the Town of Benton vote on the
(By petition) proposed increases in annual pay for the following town officials at the Town Meeting on March 10, 1998.

Board of Selectmen:

Member - Increase from \$300 annually to \$600.

Chairman - Increase from \$500 annually to \$800.

Financial Administration:

Treasurer - Increase from \$300 annually to \$600.

Tax Collector - Increase from \$300 annually to \$600.

Town Clerk - Increase from \$300 annually to \$600.

Other town officials as the town may deem appropriate and necessary.

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT* (Cont'd)

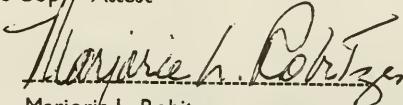
State of New Hampshire

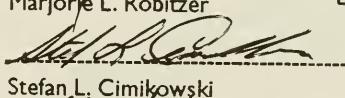
Article 5 - To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$80,804 which represents the operating budget. This sum includes both individual articles addressed.

The Selectmen recommend this article.

Article 6 - To see if the town will vote to accept the Benton Cemetery bi-laws as written.

A True Copy - Attest


Marjorie L. Robitzer


Stefan L. Cimikowski


Albert J. Boutin, Jr.

Selectmen of Benton

TOWN OF BENTON
Tax Collector's Report - 1997

1997

	Cr.	Dr.
Taxes Committed This Year:		
Property Taxes		\$193,849.70
Yield Taxes		9,375.26
Taxes Prepaid in 1996		63.77
Interest on Delinquent Taxes		2.91
	Total	\$203,291.64
Taxes Collected & Sent to Treasurer		
Property Taxes	\$157,080.36	
Yield Taxes	9,375.26	
Taxes Prepaid in 1996	63.77	
Interest on Delinquent Taxes	2.91	
	Total for 1997 Report	
	Total	\$166,522.30
Taxes Abated During the Year		387.06
Taxes Uncollected at Year-end		36,382.28
	Total	\$203,291.64

1996

	Cr	Dr
Taxes Uncollected at Beginning of Year		\$41,069.66
Error in Paul Scott Account		50.00
Mobile Home moved in after 4/1/97		225.75
Taxes Abated - Property Deeded to Town		(185.22)
	Total - 97 Report	\$41,160.19
Property Tax Overpayment		632.09
Costs to be Collected		748.00
Interest on Delinquent Taxes		2,782.73
	Total	\$45,323.01
Taxes Collected & Sent to Treasurer:		
Property Taxes	\$27,644.74	
Costs	748.00	
Property Tax Overpayment	632.09	
Interest on Delinquent Taxes	2,782.73	
	Total	\$31,807.56
Taxes Converted to Lien		\$13,515.45
	Total	\$45,323.01

TOWN OF BENTON
Tax Collector's Report - 1997 (Cont'd)

1996

	Cr.	Dr.
Liens Executed During Fiscal Year		\$15,893.06
Interest & Costs Collected After Lien Execution		25.07
Total		<hr/> \$15,918.13

Remitted to Treasurer

Redemptions	\$2,726.21
Interest & Costs Collected After Lien Execution	25.07
Unredeemed Liens Bal. at End of Year	13,166.85
Total	<hr/> \$15,918.13

1995

Unredeemed Liens Bal. at Beginning of Year	\$20,481.73
Interest & Costs Collected After Lien Execution	1,644.12
Total	<hr/> \$22,125.85
Remitted to Treasurer	
Redemptions	\$14,443.19
Interest & Costs Collected After Lien Execution	1,644.12
Liens Deeded to Town	246.14
Unredeemed Liens Bal. at End of Year	5,792.40
Total	<hr/> \$22,125.85

1994

Unredeemed Liens Bal. at Beginning of Year	\$5,711.98
Interest & Costs Collected After Lien Execution	2,387.91
Total	<hr/> \$8,099.89
Remitted to Treasurer	
Redemptions	\$5,437.40
Interest & Costs Collected After Lien Execution	2387.91
Liens Deeded to Town	274.58
Total	<hr/> \$8,099.89

DETAILED STATEMENT OF PAYMENTS
by the Selectmen

Selectmen:

Salaries	Marjorie L. Robitzer	\$500
	Stefan L. Cimikowski	300
	Albert J. Boutin, Jr.	300
Expenses	7 notices	175
		\$1,275.00

Elections and Registration:

Supervisors of the Checklist		
	Seraphene Harris	\$23.50
	Doris Boutin, Jr.	23.50
	Richard Saffo, Jr.	14.10
Election Personnel		
	Stefan Cimikowski	9.40
	Albert Boutin, Jr.	9.40
	Lyn Bandy	9.40
	Marjorie Robitzer	9.40
	Mark Elliott	9.40
Notices		43.00
		\$151.10

Financial Administration:

Treasurer, Paula Boutin	\$300.00
Tax Collector, Sharon Edwards	300.00
Town Clerk, Lyn Bandy	300.00
Auditor, Richard Dickenson	50.00
Surveyor of Wood and Lumber, Joseph Boutin, Jr.	100.00
Town Report	570.00
Town Clerk Fees	154.50
General Office Expenses	1,779.38
	\$3,553.88

Insurance and Bonds:

Liberty Mutual, Workman's Comp.	\$750.00
N.H.M.A. Liability Trust	2,010.00
	\$2,760.00

Regional Associations:

North Country Council	\$237.40
N.H. Town Clerk's Association	35.00
N.H. Municipal Association	500.00
N.H. Assoc. Of Assessors	20.00
N.H. Tax Collector's Association	15.00
	\$807.40

Fire Protection:

Twin State Mutual Aid	\$1,500.00
Haverhill Corner Fire Co.	750.00
North Haverhill Fire Co.	750.00
Bal Due on Bruce Elliott Fire	170.00
	\$3,170.00

DETAILED STATEMENT OF PAYMENTS
by the Selectmen (cont'd)

Roads:

Summer Maintenance	\$9,957.50
Winter Plowing	17,105.00
Materials and Supplies	2,016.33
F.E.M.A.	1,650.50
	\$30,729.33

Community Building:

Telephone Service	322.02
N.H. Elec. Co-op	\$232.28
Material for Repairs	18.11
Fuel Oil	718.30
Burner Cleaning	38.00
	\$1,328.71

Police Account:

\$1,651.90

Deposited to C.R.F for Roads:

\$10,000.00

Deposited to C.R.F for Fires:

\$1,356.00

County Tax:

\$18,183.00

Abatements and Refunds:

\$584.25

State of New Hampshire:

Vital Records	318.00
Animal Population Control	191.50
	\$509.50

Cemeteries:

William Harris	\$350.00
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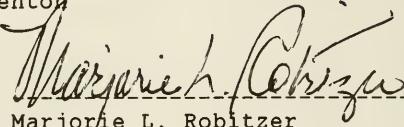
Public Welfare:

Ambulance	\$1,767.50
Senior Citizens Council	175.00
Tri-County Community Action	175.00
White Mtn. Mental Health	300.00
No. Country Home Health	300.00
Direct Assistance	1,214.28
Unpaid Ambulance Bill	396.55
	\$4,328.33

DETAILED STATEMENT OF PAYMENTS
by the Selectmen (cont'd)

Taxes Brought by Town:	\$16,265.40
Int. on T.A.N.'s:	\$1,246.94
Repayments of T.A.N.'s:	
Regular mid-year loan	\$30,000.00
1st Installment - Roads	9,000.00
	\$39,000.00
Schools:	\$206,862.00
Total Checks Written	\$344,162.84

Selectmen of Benton



Marjorie L. Robitzer



Stefan L. Cimikowski



Albert J. Boutin, Jr.

Selectmen's Report

We made it through 1997 without any extremely bad storms, winter or summer. We had the usual snow storms, icy roads and cold winter winds, but spring finally came along with nice weather and the flower and vegetable gardens came alive again.

The New Hampshire Electric Co-op cleared along their right-of-way so we could have fewer outages as a result of trees going down. The increased open spaces along the roads should help road maintenance, although, many of us liked the look and feel of all the trees towering above. We wrote to all property owners so that usable firewood could be put to use if the land owners did not intend to use it..

Bill Harris and sons set up the rest of the stones in the Mountain View Cemetery after the vandalism spree in 1996. He insisted that it didn't cost him much of anything and so would not take any repayment. Thus we still have the \$100 that was donated and will be used for some unexpected cemetery expense. We received a free maple tree from the New Hampshire Arbor Day Assn. We thought it would be a 6 to 8 foot tree that the Selectmen could plant. When a 300 pound ball with a 25 foot tree arrived, we needed help. Dan and Jessie Elliott came to the Town Hall with equipment and planted it along side of Parker Field across the road. We hope it lives for a long time. Bill Harris mowed the cemeteries and the Community Building lawn all last summer and it did look neat and well cared for.

Stefan Cimikowski re-painted the ramp at the Town Hall and Elliott Construction again put a sand pile along the parking area for any resident to use on his own driveway.

Through Laurie Elliott, we learned that the fife and drum and the old 24 star flag that were used by the Benton Fife and Drum Corps around 1913 were in the possession of the Clough family estate. Laurie's father, Tom Sawyer of Bath went to see David Clough and Lorna Clough Fogg and they were happy to donate them to the Town of Benton. Our Town Clerk, Lyn Bandy, built a shelf for these special mementos and we hope all will notice them at the Town Hall.

911 is getting closer and posts and road signs will go up in the spring. We will then get free cards from the Woodsville post office and the new numbers will have to be put up to officially mark our new addresses. This started out to be an easy six month job - three years ago!

Selectmen's Report (Con't)

Benton lost a very active Senior Citizen, Seraphene Harris, on May 28, 1997. Sera was part of the large Boutin clan in Benton with four brothers and their extended families, as well as her own, the Harris family. Sera, with her husband, Bill Harris right along side helping, organized and got many donations for the large yard and bake sales at the Town Hall, always to benefit the cemeteries. She saw to it that the stones were cleaned and straightened and that the front wall at the Mountain View Cemetery was re-aligned and additionally supported.

Sera and Bill, with some donations, saw to it that the big meeting room at the Town Hall was cleaned up and repainted and they put a new floor in the entryway.

These are some of the recent things that Sera did for the town. I think that the rest of us could see things that needed to be done, but it took a feisty pusher like Sera to see that they got done. We shall miss her and fondly remember her.

We need to bring up a situation that is not getting any better. I think everyone is aware that Benton taxes are a lot less than our neighboring towns. This is possible only because we are smaller and most of our town officers do their community jobs in the evenings and weekends. We have only token payments for jobs done - some are totally voluntary; no pay at all. We need more community minded people to help with town jobs.

We need people for the Planning Board, Supervisors, of the Checklist, a Health Officer, an Auditor for next year, and others. We want to keep our cost of doing business and thereby our taxes, DOWN. Only you can keep it going. Please volunteer to help.

Here's looking to a good 1998.

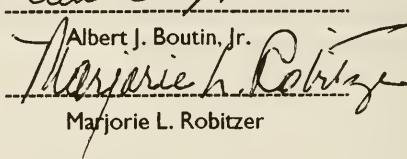
Selectmen of Benton:



Stefan Cimikowski



Albert J. Boutin, Jr.



Marjorie L. Robitzer

Treasurer's Report

Received from Tax Collector:

Property taxes, lien redemptions 1994	\$5,711.98
Interest and costs	2,387.91

	\$8,099.89

Property taxes, lien redemptions 1995	\$14,443.19
Interest and costs	1,644.12

	\$16,087.31

Property taxes	1996	\$40,073.56
Interest		2,663.55
Lien redemptions		4,128.74
Interest and costs		1,116.33
Inventory fees		30.00
Overpayment of 1996 taxes		309.67

		\$48,321.85

Property taxes	1997	\$157,074.74
Interest and costs		27.91
Inventory fees		30.00

		\$157,132.65

Received from the Town Clerk:

Motor Vehicle Permits	\$23,820.00
Transfers	197.00
Dog Licenses issued	476.00
Penalties and Fines	25.00
Vital Statistics, copies and filing	318.00

	\$24,836.00

Received from the Selectmen:

Donation for the Cemetery Fund	\$308.06
Building Permits	120.00
Pistol Permits	40.00
Rent of Town Hall	15.00
Veteran Refund	50.00
Copy of Town Report	1.50
Cash received for NSF check	35.00

	\$569.56

Treasurer's Report (cont'd)

Received from Woodsville Guaranty Savings Bank	
Tax Anticipation Note	\$30,000.00
Interest rebate on early repayment	83.21

	\$30,083.21
Transfer from Yield Account to General Account:	
From Escrow Account	\$6,533.00
Received from State of New Hampshire Sources:	
Revenue Sharing	\$5,447.95
D.O.T. Bloc Grant	10,939.31
Rooms and Meal Tax	3,496.89
Witness fee to Benton Police Officer	33.74
12 1/2% share of FEMA funds awarded in 1996 for flood damage of October 1995	1,708.00

	\$21,625.89
Received from Federal sources:	
U.S. Treasury - Fed. Land Entitlement in lieu of taxes	\$15,577.00
Total receipts for 1997	\$328,866.36
Cash on hand as of 1/1/97	70,100.17
Bank interest for 1997	558.93

	\$399,525.46
Selectmen's orders for 1997	\$344,112.84

	\$55,412.62
Less NSF check and charge	338.71
Less NSF check and charge	20.00
Plus error in deposit	2.00

	\$55,055.91

Respectfully submitted,


Paula A. Boutin

Paula A. Boutin, Treasurer

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES OF THE TRUST FUND
(for year ending December 31, 1997)

Funds donated to the Town of Benton are in the custody of the Trustees. Donations received during the year are distributed as specified by the donors. Funds received during the year are deposited in savings accounts until they can be transferred to Certificates of Deposit. All funds are held by Fleet Bank in Woodsville, N.H.

1997 Donations to the Trust Funds:

5/9/97	Richard Dickenson	\$50.00
7/1/97	Joanne Smith	100.00
7/1/97	Albert Colwell	75.00
7/1/97	Daniel Finn	<u>120.00</u>
	Total	\$345.00

1/6/97 Deposited \$5,000 in Savings for Roads

2/18/97 Withdraw \$5,014.19 from savings and added to to CRF for Roads.

12/4/97 Deposited \$10,000 in Savings for Roads to be transferred to the CRF 2/8/97.

Income received during 1997:

Interest on \$5,000 savings	\$14.19
Interest on \$10,000 savings	17.78
Interest on \$468.84 savings	8.26
Fire Fund Account - Interest	61.18
School Fund Account (\$15,000) - Interest	159.77
School Fund Account (\$25,000) - Interest	1,141.87
Highway Fund Account - Interest	389.12
Combined Fund Accts (Cemeteries, School & Highways) (\$7695.70) - Interest	342.24 **
**Divided as follows:	
Cemeteries	\$178.08
Schools	86.34
Highway	77.82
Total	\$1,824.41

Respectfully Submitted

Joseph N. Boutin, Jr.

Justen Elliott

Jeffrey Elliott

BUDGET AND SUMMARY ANALYSIS

Estimate of Expenditures

Category	Approp 1997	Expended 1997	Proposed 1998
Selectmen & Expenses	\$1,400	\$1,275	\$2,300
Elections	600	151	800
Financial Administration	3,500	3,554	5,050
Legal	2,000	0	2,000
Planning	200	0	200
Community Building	1,800	1,329	1,800
Cemeteries	580	350	528
Insurance	3,000	2,760	2,850
Adv. & Regional Assns.	850	807	850
Police Protection	1,995	1,652	1,825
Ambulance	1,768	2,165	2,101
Fire Protection	3,000	3,170	3,000
Flood Repair (Remainder of 1996 F.E.M.A. money)		1,650	
Regular Road Budget	35,000	29,079	35,000
Welfare	1,450	2,164	2,000
To C.R.F. for Fires	1,356	1,356	
To C.R.F. for Roads	10,000	10,000	10,000
Installment on Road Loan	9,000	9,000	9,000
Interest - Road Loan	571	571	769
Interest - T.A.N.	1,600	676	731
Totals	\$79,670	\$71,709	\$80,804
- Additions			
Subtractions			
Warrant Articles			
Final Figures			

BUDGET AND SUMMARY ANALYSIS
Estimate of Revenue

Sources of Revenue	Est. 1997	Rec'd 1997	Est. 1998
Yield Taxes	\$9,375	\$9,375	\$9,250
Interest & Penalties on Delinquent Taxes	5,500	7,840	7,000
Inventory Penalties	90	60	100
Motor Vehicle Registrations	22,000	24,017	24,000
Building Permits, Other Licenses, Permits & Fees	800	262	300
Federal Gov't - WMNF - In Lieu Of Taxes	16,000	15,577	16,000
State of New Hampshire			
Shared Revenue	5,000	5,448	4,000
Rooms & Meals Distr..	2,500	3,497	2,500
Highway Bloc Grant	10,438	10,939	10,640
F.E.M.A.	1,708	1,708	
Income from Trust Funds	308	308	256
Donations & Fines	500	342	100
Interest on Deposits	1,100	559	600
Total Revenue from all sources Except Property Taxes	\$75,319	\$79,932	\$74,746

TOWN OF BENTON

Summary of Inventory Valuation

Land, Improved and Unimproved:		\$137,410
Under Current Use - 1,765.3 acres		
Ad Valorum Value	\$840,090	
All other taxable land - 5,498.3 acres	3,308,190	
	-----	-----
Total of taxable land		\$3,445,600
Tax exempt and non-taxable land, 24,123.5 acres		
Assessment	\$6,858,760	
Housing:		
Residential and allied buildings	\$4,683,790	
Manufactured housing	549,240	
	-----	-----
Total		\$5,233,030
Tax exempt buildings	\$749,140	
Public Utilites:		
New England Hydro-transmission	\$1,235,265	
New England Power Co.	38,241	
New Hampshire Elec. Co-op	397,952	
	-----	-----
Total		\$1,671,458
Total Assessments:		\$10,350,088
Less elderly exemptions (3)	15,000	
	-----	-----
		\$10,335,088
Tax rate 1997	X 18.83	
	-----	-----
		\$ 194.610
Plus inventory penalties	90	
Less Abatements	508	
Less Veteran's exemptions	850	
	-----	-----
Collectable taxes		\$ 193,342

SCHEDULE OF NON-TAXABLE PROPERTY

Town of Benton:

Tunnel Br. Bridge Corner	0.3	Ac.	\$680
Parker Field	1.3	Ac.	2,950
Mt. View Cemetery	0.9	Ac.	2,040
High St. Cemetery	0.6	Ac.	1,360
East Cemetery	0.3	Ac.	680
Old Town Hall Lot	0.05	Ac.	110
N. Benton Union Soc. Lot	0.7	Ac.	1,590
 Benton Town Hall, Land & Building Furnishings & Equipment	0.2	Ac.	104,830 4,500
Benton Bible Chapel, Parsonage	1.7	Ac.	55,310
Benton Bible Chapel	1.4	Ac.	130,260

State of New Hampshire:

LaBounty Home	0.5	Ac.	1,140
N.H. Home for the Elderly	107.0	Ac.	584,540
State Forest Division	401.0	Ac.	112,280

U.S. Dept. of Agriculture

U.S. Forest Service	23,607.6	Ac.	6,610,130
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Totals	24,123.6	Ac.	\$7,612,400
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CATEGORY	APPROP.	EXTRH REVENUE	TOTAL REVENUE	EXPEND.	UNEXPEND.	OVER BAL	OVER BAL
SELECTIONS & EXPENSES	\$1,400		\$1,400	\$1,275	\$125		
ELECTIONS & REGISTRATIONS	600		600	151	449		
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION	3,500		3,500	3,555	55		
LEGAL EXPENSES	2,000		2,000		2,000		
PLANNING & ZONING	200		200		200		
COMMUNITY BUILDING	1,800		1,800	1,329	471		
CEMETERIES	580		580	350	230		
INSURANCE	3,000		3,000	2,760	240		
REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS	850		850	807	43		
POLICE	1,995		1,995	1,652	343		
FIRE PROTECTION	3,000		3,000	3,170	170		
AMBULANCE SERVICE	1,768		1,768	1,664	104		
WELFARE & DONATIONS	1,450		1,450	1,164	286		
ROADS - F.E.M.A.		1,208	1,208	1,164	44		
LOCAL MATERIALS & SUPPLIES	35,000	900	35,090	37,063	1,973		
TO C.R.F.S - ROAD FUND	10,000		10,000	10,000			
- FIRE FUND	1,356		1,356	1,356			
INTEREST	2,171		2,171	1,164	1,007		
TOTALS	\$70,670	\$1,798	\$72,468	66,217.77	411,176	411,176	

*** UNEXPENDED TOTAL \$11,176 - 1,335 = \$9,841

TOWN OF BENTON
 Report of the Town Clerk - 1997

Motor Vehicle Permits Issued	(310)	\$24,017.00
Dog Licenses Issued		501.00
Certified Copies, Record Searches, Marriage Licenses & Other Miscellaneous Fees		318.00

	Total	\$24,836.00
Submitted to the Treasurer:		
Motor Vehicle		\$23,604.00
Dog Licenses & Fines		466.50
Copies, Record Searches, Marriage License & Other Fees		147.00

	Total	\$24,217.50
Retained by the Town Clerk:		
Motor Vehicle		\$413.00
Dog Licenses & Fines		34.50
Copies, Record Searches, Marriage License & Other Fees		171.00

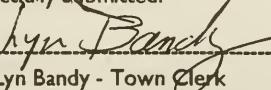
	Total	\$618.50

Notes from the Town Clerk's Office:

During the year the following important events took place:

- * There were 7 cemetery plots sold.
- * Our copier produced 1,000 copies for various town officers.
- * The town purchased a slightly used typewriter with a font that fits in the state registration blanks.
- * We received a gift of two shrubs from Marguerite Christopher that are planted on each side of the Town Hall entryway.
- * We registered 73 dogs plus 1 Kennel License. Kennel licenses are issued for households with 5 or more dogs.
- * We received a gift of a 25 foot maple tree from the N.H. Earth Day Organization and planted it in Parker Field across the road from the Town Hall.
- * Thankyou for the Bulletin Board, David Harris - It is well used.

Respectfully Submitted:


 Lyn Bandy - Town Clerk

NOTE-license dogs by Apr. 30th

IF DOG IS OVER 3 MONTHS OLD

MALE \$9.00

FEMALE \$9.00

NEUTERED MALE \$6.50

SPAYED FEMALE \$6.50

OWNER OVER 65 \$2.00

\$25.00 Forfeit if not licensed by June 1st. RSA 466:13

IMPORTANT! BE SURE TO BRING RABIES CERTIFICATE.

Licenses available from Lyn Bandy, your Town Clerk

ROAD REPORT

The year went off without too many hitches by way of road maintenance for the year of 1997. The money spent for rebuilding in 96, not only gave us better roads to travel, it also helped cut some of the maintenance cost this year. We did the general work of graveling and grading our gravel roads. We replaced and reset some culverts and cleaned some ditches.

We knew in the fall we would be well under budget and the Selectmen discussed the idea of doing some more rebuilding on some of the rough spots or paver shimming on the spots where we left off the year before. The weather had other ideas when winter arrived the first week of November and stayed. Oh well, maybe next year.

Respectfully submitted

Dan Elliott - Road Agent

REPORT OF TOWN FOREST FIRE WARDEN AND STATE FOREST RANGER

To aid your Forest Fire Warden, Fire Department and State Forest Ranger, contact your local Warden or Fire Department to find out if a permit is required. Violations of RSA 227-L:17, the fire permit law and the other burning laws of the State of New Hampshire are misdemeanors punishable by fines of up to \$2,000 and/or a year in jail. Violators are also liable for all fire suppression costs.

There are ten Forest Rangers who work for the New Hampshire Division of Forests and Lands, Forest Protection Bureau. State Forest Rangers are available to assist communities with forest fire suppression, prevention and training programs as well as the enforcement of forest fire and timber harvest laws. If you have any questions regarding forest fire or timber harvest laws, please call our office at 271-2217.

There are 2400 Forest Fire Wardens and Deputy Forest Fire Wardens throughout the state. Each town has a Forest Fire Warden and several Deputy Wardens who assist the Forest Rangers with forest fire suppression, prevention, and law enforcement. The 1997 fire season was a safe period for wildland firefighters with no major injuries reported. The drought conditions experienced during the early summer months was a significant factor resulting in the total number of fires reported during the season.

The State of New Hampshire operates 15 fire towers, 2 mobile patrols and 3 contract aircraft patrols. This early detection and reports from citizens aid in the quick response from local fire departments. This is a critical factor in controlling the size of wildland fires and keeping the loss of property and suppression costs as low as possible.

1997 FIRE STATISTICS

(All Fires Reported thru December 23, 1997)

<u>FIRES REPORTED BY COUNTY</u>		<u>CAUSES OF FIRES REPORTED</u>	
Belknap	58	Smoking	54
Carroll	96	Debris Burning	261
Cheshire	63	Campfire	99
Coos	29	Power Line	33
Grafton	51	Railroad	3
Hillsborough	145	Equipment Use	23
Merrimack	148	Lightning	14
Rockingham	54	Children	60
Strafford	63	OHRV	0
Sullivan	19	Miscellaneous	130
TOTAL FIRES	726	Incendiary	33
TOTAL ACRES	177.17	Fireworks	16

Stephen M. Kish
Forest Ranger

Wm. J. Hause
Forest Fire Warden

**TOWN MEETING
BENTON, NEW HAMPSHIRE
March 11, 1997**

Called to order by Moderator, Mark Elliott at 7:03 P.M. Lyn Bandy, Town Clerk

Motion to recess to school meeting. Reconvened at 7:20 P.M.

Article 1

To choose a Town Clerk, a Treasurer, a Tax collector, an Auditor, a Ballot Clerk, a Ballot Inspector, a Sexton and a Surveyor of Wood and Lumber for the term of one year, a Selectman, a Supervisor of the Checklist and a Trustee of the Trust Funds for a term of three years and a Member of the Planning Board for five years, plus any other officers or agents for the ensuing year.

The following town officers were elected (by the clerk casting one ballot after a voice vote):

Moderator:	John Elliott
Town Clerk:	Lyn Bandy
Treasurer:	Paula Boutin
Tax Collector:	Sharon Edwards
Auditor:	Jean Sutherland
Ballot Clerk:	Aaron Goodwin
Ballot Inspector:	Kate Goodwin
Sexton:	Bill Harris
Surveyor of Wood & Lumber:	Joe Boutin, Jr.
Selectman: (3 Year Term)	Marjorie Robitzer
Supervisor of the Checklist: (3 yrs)	Sera Harris
Trustee of the Trust Funds: (3 yrs)	Jeff Elliott
Planning Board: (5yrs)	Jeff Elliott

Article 2

To see if the Town will vote to accept the reports of officers and agents printed.

Motion passed to accept as printed in the Benton Town Report of 1996.

Article 3

By petition: To see if the Town will vote to prohibit the processing, storage and land spreading of wastewater treatment sludge/biosolids including but not limited to sewage, paper and pulp mill sludge whether it be wet, dry, composted, pelletized, mixed with other materials or injected on or into the land in the Town of Benton, for one year commencing on March 11, 1997.

Article passed over until Article 4 addressed. Article did not pass

Article 4

By petition: To see if the Town will vote to prohibit the processing, storage and land spreading of wastewater treatment sludge/biosolids, including but not limited to sewage, paper and pulp mill sludge, whether it be wet or dry, composted, pelletized, mixed with other material or injected on or into the land in the Town of Benton until such regulations are enacted by the Town Selectmen with public involvement, to control such activity.

Motion was made and seconded to accept Article 4, striking the words, until such regulations are enacted by the Town Selectmen with public involvement, to control such activity." The article passed.

Article 5

By petition: To see if the Town will vote to prohibit the processing, storage and land spreading of wastewater treatment sludge/biosolids, including but not limited to sewage, paper and pulp mill sludge, whether it be wet or dry, composted, pelletized, mixed with other material or injected on or into the land in the Town of Benton unless (1) the sludge is analyzed for arsenic, cadmium, ph, lead, mercury, nickel and dioxins; (2) the results of this analysis are filed with the Town and (3) a description of the process to achieve Class A or Class B pathogen reduction requirements is filed with the Town Selectmen.

Motion was made and seconded to defer to Article 4. The motion passed.

Article 6

To see if the Town will vote to discontinue the "so called" Sands Road into the Walter Stiebitz property on the south side of Tunnel Stream Road. (RSA 231:43)

after much discussion, including a presentation by Mr. Stiebitz, a ballot vote was taken with the result, 23 "yes" votes 21 "no" votes and 1 spoiled ballot. The article passed.

Article 7

To see if the Town will vote to discontinue the "so called" Joe Prue Road into the William and Andra House homestead off the north side of Mount Mooselauke Highway, (Route 25). (RSA 231:43)

After much discussion, a ballot vote was taken with the result, 25 "yes" votes and 16 "no" votes. The article passed.

Article 8

To see if the Town will vote to discontinue the "so called" Old Page Road which runs in a westerly direction approximately 730 feet to the Haverhill town line from Page Road. (RSA 231:43)

Motion was made and seconded to accept as written. The motion passed.

Article 9

Shall we modify the Elderly Exemptions for property tax in the Town of Benton, based on assessed value for qualified taxpayers to be as follows:

For a person of 65 years of age up to 75 years of age. \$5,000; 75 years of age to 80 years _____; for a person over 80 years _____. To qualify, the person must have been a New Hampshire resident for at least 5 years. In addition, the taxpayer must have net income of not more than \$13,400 or, if married, a combined income of not more than \$20,400; and own assets not in excess of \$35,000, excluding the value of the person's residence.

A motion was made to accept this article as follows:

\$5,000 exemption at age 65 to age 75; an additional \$5,000 from age 75 to age 80; and an additional \$5,000 for persons over 80 years. This is understood to be in increments of \$5,000 (i.e. \$5,000 from 65-75; \$10,000 from age 75 to 80; \$15,000 at age 80.) The ballot vote was 41 "yes" and 5 "no" votes. The article passed.

Article 10

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$10,000 to be added to the CRF for roads.

A motion was made and seconded that the article be accepted as written. The motion passed.

Article 11

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,356 to replace that amount withdrawn from the CRF for fires that occurred in 1996.

A motion was made and seconded that the article be accepted as written. The motion passed.

Article 12

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$67,814, which represents the operating budget. Said sum does not include individual articles addressed.

The article was amended to show the sum of \$68,314. A motion was made and seconded that the article be accepted. The motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:50 P.M. All new officers were sworn in at the closing.

A true copy - Attest

**Lyn Bandy, Town Clerk
Benton, New Hampshire**

VITAL STATISTICS

Births

March 15, 1997 Alexis Alicia Harris at Littleton Regional Hospital, Littleton, N.H.
Parents are Richard John and Kristina Lee Harris.

May 8, 1997 Arthur Jeseph Saffo at Littleton Regional Hospital, Littleton, N.H.
Parents are Veronica J. and Richard Saffo, Jr.

Marriages

June 21, 1997 David W. White and Angela S. Hoyt
Benton residents, married in Benton, N.H.

June 25, 1997 James W. Elliott, Jr. and Deborah L. Bedard
Benton residents, married in Benton, N.H.

July 19, 1997 Jeremy S. Elliott and Audrey S. Mardin
Benton residents, married in Lisbon, N.H.

October 4, 1997 Bruce J. Enderson, Jr. and Amy Lynn Caldwell
Benton residents, married in Sugar Hill. N.H.

VITAL STATISTICS

Deaths

January 14, 1997	James F. Keating, a resident of the Glencliff Home for the Elderly at age 85
January 17, 1997	Alice Mae Frances Blood, a resident of the Glencliff Home for the Elderly at age 89.
February 5, 1997	Barbara A. Roden, wife of John A. Roden of Benton at age 70.
February 7, 1997	John Rowbotham, a resident of the Glencliff Home for the Elderly at age 73.
February 9, 1997	Louisa M. Hall, mother of Harold and Paul Scott of Benton at age 91.
March 14, 1997	Lena Walsh, a resident of the Glencliff Home for the Elderly at age 97.
April 3, 1997	Harold Buckley, a resident of the Glencliff Home for the Elderly at age 90.
April 4, 1997	Philip Scott, Jr., resident of the Glencliff Home for the Elderly at age 68.
May 8, 1997	Tina Marie Pesce, daughter of Francesco and Dawn Pesce of Benton at age 5.
May 10, 1997	Essie Jerard, a resident of the Glencliff Home for the Elderly at age 79.
May 11, 1997	Roland Gagnon, a resident of the Glencliff Home for the Elderly at age 68.
May 28, 1997	Seraphene Ruth Harris, wife of William J. Harris of Benton at age 74.
July 29, 1997	Herbert Ellsworth, a resident of the Glencliff Home for the Elderly at age 71.
August 17, 1997	Elfreida Person, a resident of the Glencliff Home for the Elderly at age 92.
December 8, 1997	Sven Siron, a resident of the Glencliff Home for the Elderly at age 83.

**ANNUAL REPORT
of the
BENTON SCHOOL DISTRICT
July 1, 1996 - June 30, 1997**

DISTRICT OFFICERS

SCHOOL BOARD

Veronica Saffo	Term Expires 2000
Laurie Elliott	Term Expires 1998
Marty Noble	Term Expires 1999

OTHER DISTRICT OFFICERS

John Elliott	Moderator
Maxine Tyler	Treasurer
Sharon Edwards	Auditor
Lyn Bandy	Clerk

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Linda J. Nelson

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR

Edward N. Emond

**BENTON SCHOOL DISTRICT
SCHOOL WARRANT
STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE**

To the Inhabitants of the School District of Benton in the County of Grafton, State of New Hampshire, qualified to vote in district affairs.

You are hereby notified to meet at the Town Hall in said district on the 10th day of March, 1998, at 7:00 o'clock in the afternoon to act upon the following subjects:

- ARTICLE 1:** To choose a Moderator for the coming year.
- ARTICLE 2:** To choose a Clerk for the ensuing year.
- ARTICLE 3:** To choose one Member of the School Board, for a term of three years.
- ARTICLE 4:** To choose a Treasurer for the ensuing year.
- ARTICLE 5:** To choose an Auditor for the ensuing year.
- ARTICLE 6:** To hear reports of Agents, Committees, or Officers chosen and pass any vote relating thereto.
- ARTICLE 7:** To see if the district will vote to set the salaries of school board members at \$200 per year, the school district treasurer at \$250 per year, auditor at \$30 per year, the school district moderator at \$16 per meeting, and the school district clerk at \$16 per meeting. (The School Board recommends this Article)

ARTICLE 8: To see what sum of money the district will raise and appropriate for the support of schools, for the salaries of school district officials and agents and for the payment of statutory obligations of the district and to authorize the application against said appropriation of such sums as are estimated to be received from the state foundation aid fund together with other income; the school board to certify to the selectmen the balance between the estimated revenue and appropriation, which balance is to be raised by taxes by the town. This Article is exclusive of any other Article on the Warrant. (The School Board recommends \$265,851.99)

ARTICLE 9: To see if the School District will vote to raise and appropriate up to \$12,000 to be added to the Benton Tuition and Education Expendable Trust Fund previously established, with such amounts to be funded from the June 30, 1998 undesignated fund balance.
(Recommended by the School Board.)

ARTICLE 10: To transact any other business that may legally come before said meeting.

Given under our hands at said Benton this ____ day of February, 1998.

Veronica Saffo, Chairman

Laurie Elliott

Marty Noble
BENTON SCHOOL BOARD

**Annual School District
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, March 11, 1997**

Time: 7:08 p.m.

ARTICLE 9: To choose a Moderator for the coming year. John Elliott was elected.

ARTICLE 2: To choose a clerk for the coming year. Lyn Bandy was elected.

ARTICLE 3: To choose one member of the school board for a term of three years. Veronica Saffo was elected.

ARTICLE 4: To choose a treasurer for the ensuing year. Maxine Tyler was elected.

ARTICLE 5: To choose an auditor for the ensuing year. Sharon Edwards was elected.

ARTICLE 6: To hear reports of agents, committees, or officers chosen and pass any vote relating thereto.

The town voted to accept the reports as written and printed in the Benton Town Report of 1996.

ARTICLE 7: To see if the district will vote to set the salaries of school board members at \$150 per year, the school district treasurer at \$100 per year, auditor at \$30 per year, the school district moderator at \$16 per meeting, and the school district clerk at \$16 per meeting. (The school board recommends this appropriation.)

Motion accepted as written.

ARTICLE 8: To see if the school district will vote to raise and appropriate up to \$10,000 to be added to the Benton tuition and expendable trust fund previously established, with such amounts to be funded from the June 30, 1997 undesignated fund balance over \$15,000. (The school board recommends this appropriation.)

Motion made, seconded, and passed.

ARTICLE 9: To see what sum of money the district will raise and appropriate for the support of schools, for the salaries of school district officials and agents and for the payment of statutory obligations of the district and to authorize the application against said appropriation of such sums as are estimated to be received from the state foundation aid fund together with other income; the school board to certify to the selectmen the balance between the estimated revenue and appropriation, which balance is to be raised by taxes by the town.

Motion made, seconded, and passed.

ARTICLE 10: To hear reports of agents, committees, or officers chosen and pass any vote relating thereto.

Since this is the same as Article 6, it was passed over as an error.

Laurie Elliott moved that the meeting be adjourned, which was seconded and passed by a voice vote at 7:20 p.m.

Lyn Bandy
Benton School District Clerk

Adjourned to town meeting at 7:20 PM

BENTON SCHOOL DISTRICT
REVENUES

	1996-97 ACTUAL	1997-98 REVISED	1998-99 PROPOSED	DIFFERENCE
770 UNRESERVED FUND BALANCE	\$49,795.00	\$49,795	\$0	(\$49,795)
1121 DISTRICT APPROPRIATION	\$189,462.00	\$163,680	\$141,560	(\$22,120)
1000 REVENUE FROM LOCAL SOURCES				
1312 TUITION FROM OTHER LEA'S	\$5,800.84	\$149	\$650	
1510 INTEREST	\$795.62	\$149.00	\$650.00	
1000 TOTAL	\$6,596.46			\$501.00
3000 REVENUE FROM STATE SOURCES				
3110 FOUNDATION AID	\$51,342.29	\$70,767	\$86,052	\$15,285
3221 VOCATIONAL ED. TUITION	\$0.00	\$0	\$5,700	\$5,700
3222 VOCATIONAL TRANSPORTATION	\$3,063.50	\$0	\$952	\$952
3240 CATASTROPHIC AID	\$0.00	\$12,231	\$11,938	(\$293)
3900 KINDERGARTEN REVENUE	\$1,500.00	\$2,250	\$0	(\$2,250)
3000 TOTAL	\$55,905.79	\$85,248	\$104,642	\$19,394
4000 REVENUE FROM FEDERAL SOURCES				
4810 NATIONAL FOREST RESERVE	\$16,617.68	\$16,962	\$15,000	(\$1,962)
4920 MEDICAID REIMBURSEMENT	\$12,856.86	\$12,856	\$4,000	(\$8,856)
4000 TOTAL	\$29,474.54	\$29,818	\$19,000	(\$10,818)
TOTAL REVENUES	\$331,233.79	\$328,690	\$265,852	(\$62,838)

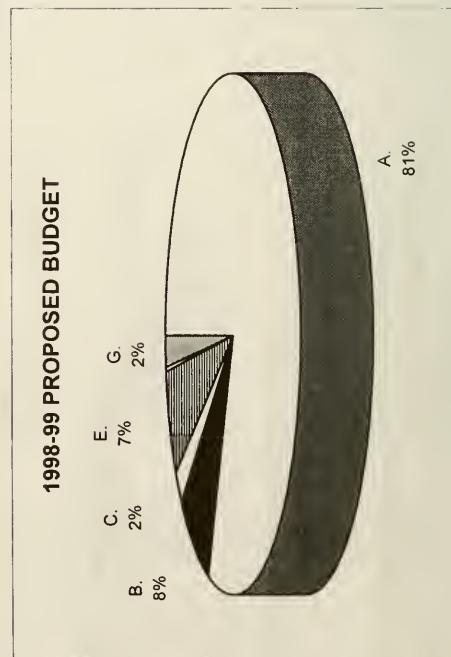
SCHOOL TAX	IMPACT	1.00 ON TAX RATE	YEAR	RATE	PERCENT +/-
1993-94		\$9,465		\$18.55	
1994-95		\$9,936		\$23.51	26.74%
1995-96		\$9,975		\$22.54	-4.13%
1996-97		\$10,108		\$20.05	-11.05%
1997-98		\$10,335		\$15.48	-22.79%
1998-99 PROPOSED		\$10,335		\$13.70	-11.52%
\$12,000 TUITION CUSHION		\$10,335		\$11.16	under 1997-98
1998-99 PROPOSED WITH CUSHION				\$14.86	under 1997-98
					-4.02%

BENTON SCHOOL DISTRICT		Original Budget <u>1997-98</u>	Proposed Budget <u>1998-99</u>	Difference <u>1997-98</u> <u>1998-99</u>
A.		Actual <u>1996-97</u>		
	<u>Instruction</u>			
	Regular Programs	190,953.10	233,937.00	211,574.00
	Vocational Education	5,400.00	11,400.00	3,800.00
	TOTAL INSTRUCTION	196,353.10	245,337.00	215,374.00
B				
	<u>Special Education</u>			
	Special Programs	61,789.40	41,007.00	19,716.00
	Summer School	923.21	2,265.00	1,425.00
	Speech and Audiology	-	100.00	0.00
	Speech - Summer School	-	75.00	0.00
	TOTAL SPECIAL EDUCATION	62,712.61	43,447.00	21,141.00

<u>C</u>	2321	<u>SAU Services</u>	6,296.00	6,007.00	5,538.00	(\$469.00)
		Office of the Superintendent	6,296.00	6,007.00	5,538.00	(\$469.00)
<u>D</u>	390	<u>Other General Administration</u>	50.00	-	0.00	\$0.00
		Misc. Services	50.00	-	0.00	\$0.00
		TOTAL OTHER GENERAL ADMIN.				
<u>E</u>		<u>Transportation</u>				
	2552	To and From School	14,182.36	15,699.00	15,699.00	\$0.00
	2553	Handicapped	691.20	3,873.00	2,000.00	(\$1,873.00)
	2558	Summer School Handicapped	247.22	1,397.00	0.00	(\$1,397.00)
		TOTAL TRANSPORTATION	15,120.78	20,969.00	17,699.00	(\$3,270.00)
<u>F</u>	513	<u>Vocational Transportation</u>				
		Bus	1,180.48	-	952.00	\$952.00
		TOTAL VOCATIONAL TRANS	1,180.48	-	952.00	\$952.00

<u>DISTRICT SUMMARY CONTINUED</u>		<u>Original Budget 1997-98</u>	<u>Proposed Budget 1998-99</u>	<u>Difference 1997-98 1998-99</u>
<u>G</u>		<u>Actual 1996-97</u>		
	<u>School Board</u>			
2311	School Board	2,903.66	2,738.00	\$85.00
2313	Treasurer	118.00	127.00	\$163.00
2314	Election and District Meeting	32.00	35.00	\$0.00
2315	Legal Fees	-	0.00	\$0.00
2317	Audit	30.00	30.00	\$1,970.00
	TOTAL SCHOOL BOARD	3,083.66	2,930.00	\$2,218.00
<u>H</u>				
	<u>Other District Wide Services</u>			
	Transfer to Expendable Trust	25,000.00	10,000.00	(\$10,000.00)
	TOTAL OTHER DISTRICT WIDE	25,000.00	10,000.00	(\$10,000.00)
	GRAND TOTAL	309,796.63	328,690.00	265,852.00

<u>H</u>	5255	Other District Wide Services	25,000.00	10,000.00	0.00	(\$10,000.00)
		Transfer to Expendable Trust	25,000.00	10,000.00	0.00	(\$10,000.00)
		GRAND TOTAL	309,796.63	328,690.00	265,852.00	(62,838.00)



BENTON SCHOOL DISTRICT 1997 - 98
STUDENTS TUITIONED TO HAVERHILL COOPERATIVE SCHOOL DISTRICT
(AS OF 2-3-98)

	<u>TOTAL</u>
Woodsville Elementary School	13
Haverhill Cooperative Middle School	19
Woodsville High School	9
TOTAL	41



TO THE SCHOOL BOARD AND CITIZENS OF BENTON, I SUBMIT MY THIRD ANNUAL REPORT

SAU 23 faced changes and challenges in 1997. At the SAU level, Denis Ward of the Monroe School Board continued as Chair of the SAU 23 Board. Sarah Lester of Warren was elected Vice Chair. At their District Meeting in March, 1997, Monroe voters decided to study the feasibility of withdrawing from SAU 23. It was felt that after about 20 years of questions about whether or not SAU participation was cost-effective for this school of approximately 100 students, the issue should be investigated. A Monroe withdrawal would increase the district assessments of remaining districts. However, any change, if the town determined one was needed, would take place in the 1999-2000 school year. The Feasibility Study Committee's Plan was approved by the State Board of Education in January. While the Monroe School Board in January voted four to one not to support the withdrawal plan for the district, voters at the Monroe District Meeting March 10 will make the final decision.

Finding the appropriate, affordable administrative staffing mix for SAU 23 has continued to be a challenge for the twenty-four member SAU 23 Board. When Lynda Fredenberg retired in June, 1997, a half-position in the Finance Office was eliminated in an effort to cut expenses. Marilyn Newman joined the staff part-time in Lynda's place. Her very capable work has already made her an important team member at the SAU. Ed Emond, Business Administrator, also resigned in June, 1997 to take over similar responsibilities in Laconia, New Hampshire. Charles McCoy was selected to replace Emond in July, 1997. By November Mr. McCoy agreed that the financial challenges of administering a six district SAU were more than he had bargained for and resigned.

At the request of Finance Office staff, the SAU did not immediately attempt to replace the Business Administrator position. Staff asked for time to complete the current budget cycle with guidance from district auditors and NH Departments of Revenue and Education. This allows the SAU Board seek advice from finance experts to determine what kind of Finance Office staffing arrangement makes best sense given the level of skills that have been developed in-house over the past three years, in particular by Pat Amsden and Jean Sutherland, who have taken over the day-to-day operation of the Finance Office with assistance from Connie Verratti, Sherry Brill and Marilyn Newman.

In Benton, Veronica Saffo assumed Chair of the Board taking over from Laurie Elliott. Veronica also represents Benton on the SAU 23 Executive Board. In discussions of Board responsibilities, Saffo has noted the

importance of Benton Board Members keeping abreast of school issues in Haverhill, where educational program decisions that affect Benton students are made. In that light, information about Haverhill's year is included here.

Finance issues have been in the forefront this year in Haverhill as changes in two special education placements after the budget was set in March placed the school budget in deficit. New revenues and some restructuring of special education and student support programs has allowed the district to maintain educational program quality while we continue to grapple with high special education costs.

A resignation by a special educator at Woodsville High School prompted a series of job changes which resulted in Michael Penkert joining the SAU as Director of Instructional Support Services, a position which Donna Hart had held until choosing to return to Haverhill as a special educator. Michael comes to SAU 23 from the Becket School where he had worked for many years. He will be leading the district's assessment of special education and Title One programs, a process begun in the fall and continuing throughout the school year. Special education costs have escalated, an experience not unique to Haverhill but very problematic in a district with limited resources for schools.

A question asked in the Haverhill March 1997 District Meeting shapes the rest of this report: that is, what are the long range goals for our schools and are we making progress in meeting them? Six goals help direct our work. The Mission Statement that prefaces the goals is: All students in SAU 23 schools will be provided the highest quality of academic instruction in positive, safe learning environments that promote inquiry and appreciation for life long learning, so that graduates have the knowledge and skills necessary to participate fully and productively in a democratic, technologically advanced society.

We have made progress toward our goals in the past year.

1. All students will enter school ready to learn. Although not every three and four year old are enrolled in preschool, the White House, SAU 23's pre-school program housed at Woodsville Elementary School, continues to thrive in its second year of operation. Sarah Jean Harris, the able instructor who set up the program, left to assume a position at Bethlehem Elementary School. Deb Smith, a special educator at Woodsville Elementary School with previous background in early childhood education, has become the White House educator in charge. Head Start continues to offer programs there on Tuesdays and Thursdays, with the SAU 23 programs offered in two sessions on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

The Haverhill Community Resource Consortium, headed by Shand Wentworth, has assumed the responsibility for Success by Six programs in Haverhill. Family Night Out, which helps to link families to existing services in the area, is planned for March this year.

2. All students will be successful learners, performing at their maximum learning potentials. One measure of success here is student performance on New Hampshire's Assessment of Academic Progress at third, sixth and tenth grades. Student scores are reported below. Woodsville Elementary School students seem to be showing the benefit of teacher attention to instructional practices that support student success on the tests. Over the past four years, student scores have moved up from the lowest categories, with recent scores moving into the Advanced levels. Woodsville High School has scored at approximately state average for two years. As teachers develop a better understanding of the tests, we might anticipate even higher scores at the high school level. Haverhill Cooperative Middle School has not scored well in either year. Mrs. Tracy has organized a team of teachers to analyze the tests and review instructional practices to make sure that student scores do not remain low.

The work of SAU 23's Curriculum Advisory Committee continues with Nancy Sandell of Piermont Village School as Chair. SAU 23 and local boards adopted the Curriculum Frameworks for Health, Physical Education and Art this year. The Technology Committee requested a revision of the proposed Framework based on our districts' newly developed Technology Plans. A social studies curriculum review is also planned to bring the SAU 23 curriculum in line with the NH State Frameworks.

Haverhill schools completed a three-year Technology Plan this fall. It has received state approval and forms the basis for grant applications as well as in-district funding plans. On the Warrant, at the recommendation of the Haverhill Citizen's Budget Committee as well as the School Board, is an Article intended to fund the first phase of the Technology Plan. We are starting with Woodsville Elementary School where the Plan calls for networking computers, which will allow students to access more software in the classrooms, and for a Library Cluster of networked computers which will allow students to do research through Internet. The Article also provides for district-wide professional development for faculty and staff to help us better use the technology we have for instructional purposes.

Student assessment practices are getting a careful look this spring. Teacher committees from each school will be asked to develop a coherent assessment plan pre-K-12 that aligns with our curriculum and assures us that students are meeting consistent district benchmarks as they move from grade to

grade. Professional development for teachers on strengthening student assessments continued in January, 1998 when WES and HCMS teachers joined Monroe faculty in a day-long workshop. Further work on this topic will continue over the next year.

Block scheduling at Woodsville High School is intended to provide students with more academic learning time. A mid-year survey of the program by students indicate that they support the new design, although they had many suggestions for teachers on how to improve on it. Mr. Labs and WHS faculty are analyzing the survey to make adjustments for the second term.

3. Students will learn in safe, positive learning environments.

Teachers have invested a considerable amount of time analyzing school climate issues this year, with a School Forum and several school board meetings devoted to discussion of school discipline and other climate issues. In the summer, 1997, SAU 23 sponsored a week-long workshop at Haverhill Cooperative Middle School with Mike Mezzochi in which teachers from each school developed plans for student support centers. Mezzochi has spent two additional weeks in the schools during this year and will be offering a second week-long workshop in the summer on school climate. In addition, all SAU 23 students in grades three through twelve will be taking a Student Aspirations Survey this year. Developed by the National Center for Student Aspirations, this survey gives guidance to faculty and staff about student attitudes about school and future plans. A student mentoring program that links WHS students with elementary and middle school students has also been successful in encouraging students to read and develop stronger connections to school programs. A successful grant writing summer led by Bruce Labs, Woodsville High School's principal, funded the district's mentoring activities as well as a late bus for students. All these activities are part of the schools' long range plan to ensure that schools have in place the kind of supports that allow students to thrive.

In terms of the physical environment of schools, the Honeywell improvements in the buildings' heating, lighting and air quality systems have made a significant difference in the schools. We are realizing the promised efficiencies in electrical usage and heating costs. Air quality is much better, particularly at Woodsville Elementary School. Richard Patten, Custodian at WES who works with Honeywell managers to maintain the systems in all schools, has done an excellent job for us.

4. Teachers will exhibit the highest levels of professional practice in their work. Teachers have participated in several focused professional development activities aimed at strengthening our literacy and math instruction. Workshops and in-class assistance with Debby Head and Libby

Pollett, math consultants who have worked with us over the past three years, continue to improve math problem-solving instruction. Debby and Libby will be returning this summer for another week-long activity in Haverhill schools.

Strengthening our literacy programs is another target for the schools. Teachers from all three schools participated in a week-long Literacy workshop last summer, and many more plan to do so again this summer. This kind of targeted professional development, sustained over time, is preferred to "one-shot" programs that, while inspiring, tend not to have the lasting impact of consultants who get to know our teachers and programs over time. The technology professional development that will be provided if the Technology Article passes will focus on effective use of technology to support instruction in the core subject areas.

The new teacher salary schedule adopted last year during successful collective bargaining negotiations also seems to be meeting its goal. More teachers than ever in the past six years have notified the SAU of Track Changes, meaning they have completed course work needed to move from one salary track to another. This was the hope of school board and teacher negotiators when the new schedule was adopted.

5. Parents and community members will understand and support school goals and direction. This goal may be the most illusive, but we continue to try to improve communication about the schools in a number of ways. The SAU 23 School-Community Forums allow community members to hear from the consultants who work with us. Last year, Debby Head and Libby Pollett held an evening on mathematics instruction. Mike Mezzochi spent an evening discussing student discipline issues with parents. The School Forum facilitators, Dale Fadden, Bruce Bishop and Scott Edwards have held three round table discussions at School Board meetings that have been well attended and very well organized.

Although an eye operation interrupted my SAU 23 NOTES for awhile, these NOTES, published with the SAU 23 Calendar in the Showcase each month, are another attempt to keep people informed about school programs. Under the leadership of Chip Harris, Chair of Haverhill's School Board, we initiated a newsletter sent to every postal patron in Haverhill in the spring of 1997 to let the public know about issues that have come before the Board during the year. A 1998 issue is also planned and will be sent to Benton families as well.

In spite of these multiple strategies for keeping the public informed, and even with the monthly school board meetings open for public participation,

we still hear that communication needs to be improved and continue to look for ways to do so.

6. School budgets will be fiscally responsible while promoting academic excellence. The budget that follows is an example of our attempt to meet this goal. The budget maintains school programs at or slightly above the current year's funding levels. We have begun to restructure the special education program, adding a resource room at Woodsville Elementary School and maintaining the Multi-Age Classroom (called MAC) at Haverhill Cooperative Middle School. These programs provide for a broader continuum of services for students, breaking our reliance on the hiring of Instructional Assistants as our only alternative for students in need of special services. These changes have strengthened our programs and realized significant cost savings - a win-win for students and taxpayers. We thank the Haverhill Citizens' Budget Committee, Chaired by Gary Elliott, citizen members Karen Whalen, Roland Clifford, Phil Conrad and Scott Edwards, and Board members Donna Roche, Kevin Shelton and Harry Norcross for helping to develop the budget recommendations and Technology Warrant Article.

Progress toward our goals is possible because of the leadership of the School Boards. They have maintained an unwavering focus on academic achievement and teaching quality. The time and attention the three Benton Board Members and the seven Haverhill Board Members give to our schools is laudable. As always at this time of year, thanks are due to the School Boards for the clear direction, leadership and on-going support of our schools; to the principals and assistant principals for tireless and able leadership; to the faculty and staff for dedication to our students; and to the Benton community for your support for the schools.

Having ended on a school finance note last year, I would be remiss in not acknowledging the potential importance of the NH Supreme Court's decision to re-design school financing this year. The proposed changes in financing are likely to bring much needed tax relief to Benton and Haverhill, and, with it, the possibility that our educational programs, which have always been adequate thanks to local voters' support for schools, will be even stronger.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda J. Nelson
Superintendent

School Administrative Unit #23

Report of the Superintendent's and Business Administrator's Salaries

Section 5, Chapter 243, Laws of 1953 of the State of New Hampshire requires that school district annual reports show the total amount paid to the Superintendent and Business Administrator.

One-half of the School Administrative Unit expenses is prorated among the several school districts of the Unit on the basis of adjusted valuation. One-half is prorated on the basis of average daily membership in the schools for the previous school year ending June 30. The Superintendent of SAU #23 during the 1997-98 school year will receive a salary of \$64,375 prorated among the several school districts. The Business Administrator will receive a salary of \$43,000.00 prorated among the several school districts.

The table below shows the proration of the salary to each school district:

1997-98		
Superintendent Salary		
Bath	\$5,645.69	8.77%
Benton	\$984.94	1.53%
Haverhill Cooperative	\$36,236.69	56.29%
Monroe	\$11,433.00	17.76%
Piermont	\$5,529.81	8.59%
Warren	\$4,544.88	7.06%
TOTAL SALARY	\$64,375.00	
Business Administrator Salary		
Bath	\$3,771.10	8.77%
Benton	\$657.90	1.53%
Haverhill Cooperative	\$24,204.70	56.29%
Monroe	\$7,636.80	17.76%
Piermont	\$3,693.70	8.59%
Warren	\$3,035.80	7.06%
TOTAL SALARY	\$43,000.00	

